

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 8, 17, and 21 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:

a forwarding element adapted to perform data forwarding in a computer network;

b1 a control element adapted to perform network signaling and control in the computer network, wherein the control element is adapted to generate a uniform standardized data set for configuring the forwarding element ~~and is external to the forwarding element;~~

an interconnecting element operatively connecting the forwarding element to the control element; and

a forwarding element plugin integrated with the control element for receiving the uniform standardized data set from the control element, translating the uniform standardized data set into a proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element, and transmitting the proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element to configure the forwarding element, wherein the forwarding element utilizes the proprietary specialized data set to configure the forwarding element for performing data forwarding in the computer network.

2. (Original) The computer system according to claim 1, further including an opaque forwarding element plugin for receiving the standardized data set from the control element and transmitting the standardized data set to the forwarding element plugin, and for receiving the specialized data set from the forwarding element plugin

and transmitting the specialized data set to the forwarding element.

3. (Original) The computer system according to claim 1, wherein the specialized data set is a binary large object.

4. (Original) The computer system according to claim 1, wherein the forwarding element further includes a decapsulator that receives the specialized data set and decapsulates the specialized data set into data readable by a device-specific forwarding element interface of the forwarding element to configure the forwarding element.

5. (Original) The computer system according to claim 1, wherein the specialized data set is transmitted to a decapsulator in the forwarding element for decapsulating the specialized data set.

6. (Original) The computer system according to claim 1, wherein the specialized data set is encrypted before transmission to the forwarding element, and the encrypted specialized data set is decrypted at the forwarding element.

7. (Original) The computer system according to claim 1, wherein the forwarding element plugin is a dynamic link library.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of configuring a computer device, the

method comprising:

generating a uniform standardized data set by a control element for configuring a forwarding element; ~~wherein the control element is external to the forwarding element;~~

transmitting the uniform standardized data set from the control element to a forwarding element plugin integrated with the control element;

61 translating the uniform standardized data set into a proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element; and

transmitting the proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element for configuring the forwarding element.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the forwarding element is adapted to perform data forwarding in a computer network.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the control element is adapted to perform network signaling and control in a computer network.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 8, further including:
receiving the standardized data set by an opaque forwarding element plugin from the control element; and
transmitting the standardized data set by the opaque forwarding element plugin to the forwarding element plugin.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 8, further including:
receiving the specialized data set by an opaque forwarding element
plugin from the forwarding element plugin; and
transmitting the specialized data set by the opaque forwarding element
plugin to the forwarding element.

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13. (Original) The method according to claim 8, further including:
decapsulating the specialized data set into data readable by a device-
specific forwarding element interface of the forwarding element for configuring
the forwarding element.

14. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the specialized data
set is a binary large object.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 8, further including:
encrypting the specialized data set before transmitting the specialized
data set to the forwarding element; and
decrypting the specialized data set at the forwarding element.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the forwarding
element plugin is a dynamic link library.

17. (Currently Amended) An article comprising a machine-readable medium

storing instructions when executed by a processor, the instructions,

receiving a uniform standardized data set for configuring the forwarding element generated by the control element, ~~wherein the control element is external to the forwarding element,~~

translating the uniform standardized data set into a proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element, and

transmitting the proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element for configuring the forwarding element.

18. (Previously Amended) The article according to claim 17, wherein the instructions further perform:

receiving the uniform standardized data set from an opaque forwarding element plugin; and

transmitting the proprietary specialized data set to the opaque forwarding element plugin.

19. (Previously Amended) The article according to claim 17, wherein the instructions further perform:

encrypting the proprietary specialized data set before transmission to the forwarding element.

20. (Previously Amended) The article according to claim 17, wherein the proprietary specialized data set includes a binary large object.

21. (Currently Amended) The article according to claim 17, wherein the instructions include machine-readable medium includes a dynamic link library.
